DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 688 CS 212 543

AUTHOR Juliebo, Moira F.; Jackson, Robert K.
TITLE Partnership in Teacher Education: Language Arts Education. Research Progress Report.
PUB DATE May 90
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association (35th, Atlanta, GA, May 6-11, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; Elementary Education; *English Teacher Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Instructional Innovation; *Language Arts; Professional Development; Research Methodology; *Theory Practice Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Alberta (Edmonton)

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the ongoing process of a partnership project between the staff of an elementary school and senior education students enrolled in a language arts minor. The project detailed in the paper is measuring the effectiveness of a school-based language program and examining the impact of the program on the staff of the school in terms of feasibility and professional growth. The paper explains that the project involves the teaching of a 9-credit curriculum and instruction course in an elementary school by a team of three instructors (two from the university and the school administrator) in partnership with the school staff of 22 teachers and 25 university students. Following an introduction which outlines the project, the paper's four sections discuss: (1) Relationship to Existing Research and Literature; (2) Research Plan and Methods; (3) Research Procedures and Schedule; and (4) Preliminary Observations. (SR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED324688

PARTNERSHIP IN TEACHER EDUCATION: LANGUAGE ARTS EDUCATION

RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT

MOIRA F. JULIEBÖ
ROBERT K. JACKSON

Department of Elementary Education
University of Alberta

Paper presented at the International Reading Association Annual Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, May 1990.

CS212543

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Moira Juliebo

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Partnership in Teacher Education: Language Arts Education

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the impact of a partnership project involving Language Arts instruction upon teacher education students and school staff. The project involved the teaching of a nine credit curriculum and instruction course (Ed CI 428) in LaPerle Elementary School by a team of three instructors, two from the university and the school administrator, in partnership with the school staff of twenty-two teachers and twenty-five university students. The students attended the school for three mornings a week and worked with the school staff and the team of instructors.

A crucial element of this project is the attempt to systematically monitor the effects of the program upon the teacher education students and the school staff over a three year period. With this in mind, the major research purposes of the project are:

1. To measure the effectiveness of a school-based language education project in partnership with the staff of an elementary school, upon senior education students who are enrolled in the Language Arts minor.
2. To examine the impact of the program on the staff of the school in terms of feasibility and professional growth.

This paper will describe the on-going process by describing the project, making a progress report and offering initial observations on the research data.

Introduction

If indeed the "roots of educational excellence are in the preparation of teachers" (Heck, 1986) then university professors in a faculty of education must constantly seek ways to best teach curriculum and instruction courses to undergraduates. Serious doubt has been cast on whether existing faculty programs can "effectively integrate theory and practice" (Miller & Taylor, 1984). Cruickshank (1985) maintains that successful teacher preparation programs should include clinical experiences both on and off campus. He advocates a considerable increase in programs which are field-based and staffed co-operatively by university faculty and practicing teachers. In response to this call a partnership program was developed by the Brigham Young University and apublic school system. Studies of this endeavor, to date, report high growth in professional education when school faculties and university faculties collaborate in teacher education programs (Harris, 1988).

The purposes of this study are to:

a. measure the effectiveness of a school-based language education project in partnership with the staff of an elementary school, upon 3 classes of senior education students who are enrolled in the language arts minor Ed CI 428 (9 Credits).

b. examine the impact of this program over a period of 3 years on the staff of the school in terms of feasibility and professional growth.

Research questions will focus on the impact of school based CI experience on senior students; and the impact of the inservice component of the program on the school teachers. Specifically the following research questions will be addressed:

a. What changes can be detected in the constructs of the students with respect to effective language arts teaching and their constructs of teacher education?

b. How will the project affect teachers' perceptions of effective teacher education programs?

The study has relevance for both university undergraduate programs in language arts and the inservice programs of teachers. If the method of delivery is both feasible and effective it will provide a significant alternative to current delivery systems for Ed CI courses.

The model used in this study is consistent with current trends towards cooperative projects between Edmonton Public and Separate schools and the University of Alberta. Data gathered will contribute to the growing knowledge about the effectiveness of "teacher education programs characterized by a strong interactive relationship between university and field personnel" (Patterson, 1987). The study is highly collaborative in that it has what Goodlad (1987) describes as the following three essential characteristics:

> "A degree of dissimilarity between or among the partners; the mutual satisfaction of self-interests; a measure of selflessness on the part of each sufficient to assume his satisfaction of self-interests by all involved."

Relationship to Existing Research and Literature

There have been many recent studies on the subject of how to heighten the effectiveness of teacher education (Patterson 1987). A close examination of the literature at times provides little evidence of the efficacy of some innovative advances. For example, some claim that all that is needed is longer practicums, clearer connections between theory and practice and better co-operation between universities and school districts. Examples of such studies are:

a. The Ontario Association of Deans of Education, in a paper written 1982 maintain, that "One of the greatest challenges of teacher education is the articulation of the proper balance between the school-based practicum experience and the academic program of studies" p. 3.

b. Lanier and Little (1986) indicate that participants in higher education are in general dissatisfied with the nature of their undergraduate programs in education.

c. Miklos and Green in their 1987 study find that many University of Alberta graduates claim that there is a wide gap between what they do in university classes and what happens in schools.

The literature also abounds in studies which examine, criticize and propose models for teacher education. Zeichner (1983) claims that four paradigms dominate teacher education as follows: behavioristic where students are viewed as receivers of information; personalistic where students are active participants in the content of their own programs; traditional-craft

where teacher education is viewed as an apprenticeship and the inquiry-oriented paradigm where teachers develop a theoretical understanding as they engage in teaching and constantly reflect on the process (Exploring and Mapping the Future, 1989).

For the past three years the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, has conducted a Strategic Planning Project and in a recent report, Exploring and Mapping the Future: A Focus in Priority Issues, the Task Force advocates a reflection-in-action model for the Faculty in that "Such an approach has the potential to make the school the centre of inquiry and to have teachers view themselves as researchers (p. 31)." This approach is intended to present the students with what Schon (1987) calls a "Meno-like predicament" as they learn to teach, with action followed by reflection.

In an attempt to move towards this model University of Alberta professors have recently conducted collaborative research projects with school personnel and several curriculum courses have had practicum elements. In response to the Task Force's (1989) request for development and evaluation of the proposed reflection-in-action model, Ed CI 428 is being taught in a school partnership where it is hoped that students will increase their knowledge from reflection after action. This organization, it is hoped, will stress the importance of potential teachers and practicing teachers collaborating in the development of knowledge in the lifelong process of teacher education. The research aspect of the project involves careful monitoring of this innovative endeavor.

Research Plan and Methods

The research focuses upon the impact of a partnership project, concerned with Language Arts instruction, upon the teacher education students and school staff. The partnership project involves the teaching of a nine credit curriculum and instruction course (Ed CI 428) in LaPerle Elementary school by a team of three instructors, two from the university and the school administrator, in partnership with the school staff of twenty-two teachers and twenty-five university students. The students are in the school for three mornings a week

working with the school staff and the team of instructors. Three primary elements are included in the school experience:

1. Reflective classroom practice: The university students work with the school staff in the classrooms with a focus upon Language Arts instruction. One of the main elements of the practice is to reflect upon the classroom experiences to bring together the wisdom of practice with recent educational theory on pedagogy and Language Arts instruction.

2. Individual tutorials: To assist with the process of reflection and to introduce relevant theoretical issues, the education student engages in individual tutorials with members of the instructional team. The tutorials will emphasize individual goal setting, the interpretation of recent experiences and strategies for pedagogical problem solving.

3. Seminars/Workshops: The large group seminars involve the students, teaching staff of the school and the Ed CI 428 instructional team. Topics will be generated from the mutual concerns of the entire group in the partnership project and will involve various members of the group in leadership roles for various seminars/workshops. The intent of the seminars/workshops is to bring recent research to bear upon instructional issues that are relevant in an on-going school situation.

The intent of the research project is to monitor the impact of the partnership project upon both the university students and the school staff by means of both pre/post measures and observation over the duration of three years with the project.

I. Sample: The sample for the study each year consists of the twenty-two teachers, twenty-five university students and three instructors who are participating in the partnership project during the winter term January to April.

II. Instruments: In order to examine the research questions, the following procedures are being used.

1. Narrative Technique: The narrative technique is adapted from the recent work of Simmons and Sparks (1989). The procedure involves asking the participant to provide a narrative or "tell a story" which illustrates their conception of a concept such as "good Language Arts instruction in the elementary school." The narrative may draw upon any combination of actual or conceived events. The procedure is designed to provide participants with an opportunity to externalize the constructs which they hold with respect to a topic by means of a non-threatening narrative situation.

Each of the students involved in the partnership project is being asked to provide a narrative both before and after the project which illustrates their ideas about good Language Arts instruction in the elementary school. The narratives will be analyzed to identify the themes present in each narrative and to compare any changes which may take place in those themes before and after the project.

Each of the teachers involved in the partnership project is being asked to provide a similar narrative but related to an illustration of "good teacher education." A similar analysis will be undertaken.

2. Interviews: All participants in the project are being interviewed during the course of the project to ascertain their perceptions of the project and, in particular, the impact which the project has had upon them. The interview protocols will be analyzed to identify the themes present and to classify those themes.

3. Participant observation: Members of the Ed CI instructional team will be asked to keep logs noting events during the project. All other participants will be asked to note any events which they may feel are significant and report them to the research assistant or one of the team of instructors.

4. Meeting are being held throughout the project with a group consisting of:

   - a selection of university students
   - a selection of staff members
   - the University Instructors
   - a University professor who is acting as sounding board for the University staff.

   At these meetings concerns are aired and changes proposed for future implementations.

Research Procedures and Schedule 1st year of project (1990)

1. Developmental Activity: (June to September, 1989)
   Exploratory discussions took place with the staff and administration of LaPerle School and initial approval of the project by the school staff was given. Discussions with various university and school board officials also occurred. Proposals for the instructional and research aspects of the project were developed.

2. Initial Data Collection: (October to January, 89-90)
   The initial narratives and interviews were collected from the university students and school staff.

3. The university personnel conducted two major inservices for the school staff: (September to December, 1989)

   Diagnostic Techniques for Children At-Risk in Reading
   Evaluation of Children's Writing.

4. Diagnostic Procedures were implemented to identify 24 at-risk young readers. (Gr 1-2).

5. Program Implementation: (January to April, 1990).
   The instructional program was implemented in the school.

6. Final Data Collection: (April, 1990).
Final narratives and interviews were gathered during the month of April. Staff and students involved in the project were asked to submit any comments or observations concerning their perceptions of the project and the impact it had upon them.

7. Data Analysis: (May to September, 1990).
The final narratives and interviews from the first year will be analyzed to identify the themes and a comparison will be made to the initial data. As well, the observational data will be surveyed to detect recurring trends. Where possible, identified themes in the data will be explored with participants in the project for verification.

8. Written Report: (July to October, 1990).
An interim report will be written and shared with project participants.

Preliminary Observations

At the completion of the first year of the project and based upon an examination of the students' reflection journals, the interviews of the students and partnership teachers, and our on-going field notes, we are able to make a number of preliminary observations. A closer examination of the data, and particularly the narratives, is in progress and may confirm or alter our preliminary perceptions.

1. The differences in the preparedness of students for the school-based, reflection experiences:

While all students were in the fourth year of their programs and had completed their Practicum experiences, there were noticeable differences between students in the extent to which they were prepared for and able to profit from the learning experiences pertaining to the project. Some of the students were looking forward to their entry into the teaching profession and were eager to develop a professional stance towards responsibilities, to acquire a repertoire of techniques and ideas which could be used in the coming year and to explore their own thinking about teaching and learning. Other students appeared to be more confined or satisfied with the student role and tested the minimal limits of responsibility and initiative within the project. Many of the students although appearing to be unclear about their roles at the

beginning of the project were willing to explore and learn. This latter group made noticeable progress in making transitions towards professional roles.

2. The groundedness of construct formation:

A small number of generalizations related to language learning form the conceptual basis of the ED CI 428 course. In previous years these concepts have been explained, developed on-campus through a variety of simulation experiences and applied in structured classroom practice. In the project, many of these same concepts were developed through the reflection conferences and journals. In the latter case, students rather than instructors expressed the constructs and, through discussion, were able to cite classroom experiences that led to their understanding of and belief in the constructs. An example of a generalization basic to the course would be that children learn language by using their language in communication situations. This generalization arose, in numerous instances, in the reflection conferences and journals. During discussion, students described instances of children using their own language during drama, cooperative learning and personal writing incidents. The university students thus grounded the construct in their professional experiences.

3. The organic nature of the project over time:

Once the project had begun in the school, it appeared to take on a life of its own and grow and change over the course of the term. The initial period of euphoria in which everyone delighted in everything was followed by a clash of cultures where differences in perceptions about roles and responsibilities became evident and caused some conflicts. This relatively brief but troubling period ended with a student and instructor meeting off campus followed by a school meeting involving the students, partnership teachers and instructors. In these meetings, roles and expectations were clarified, feelings were voiced and collegial relationships strengthened. The last and longest period of the project was characterized by positive realism during which considerable professional growth was noted in the students.

4. Reflection as meaning-making:

Initial discussions about the role of reflection in the project implicitly suggested that implied a "criticalness" should be a considerable component in the reflection. However, once the project was under way, reflection tended to focus on meaning-making as personal understanding. While these two aspects of reflection are not necessarily mutually exclusive, the students appeared to be at a stage in their professional development where grappling with personal understanding or meaning-making was of greater interest than was critical judgement. This may also have been influenced by the instructors' understanding of, and familiarity with, reflection for professional growth.

5. The importance of the school context:

Considerable attention was given to the selection of the school for the partnership project and experiences in the first year have confirmed the importance of the school context in projects of this nature. The school is a large one which can accommodate all of the university students. The staff and administration are highly professional, demanding of themselves and others, innovative and committed to their students. Time and again the university students expressed amazement at the professional vigour in the school and pointed out that LaPerle school differed markedly from the schools they had experienced in their Practicum programs. The nature of this school exerted a profound influence on the professional experiences of the university students.

References

Cruickshank, D. R. (1985). Politics and teacher education reform. Journal of Teacher Education. 34 (1), 8-11.

Faculty of Education (1989). Exploring and mapping the future: a focus on priority issues. University of Alberta, Alberta.

Goodlad, J. I. (1984). A place called school: Prospects for the future. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Goodlad, J. I. (1987) Separate Schools and universities can and must work together. Principal. 9-14.

Heck, S. F. (1986). Teacher education in a co-operative effort. The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Lanier, J.E. and Little, J.W. (1986). Research on teacher education. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching, 3rd ed., pp. 527-568. New York: Macmillan.

Miklos, E. Green, M., & Conklin, R. (1987). Teachers evaluation of their preparation for teaching. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Teachers' Association.

Miller, P. J. and Taylor, G. D. (1984). The theory-practice relationship in teacher education: Need there be any?" The Alberta Journal of Educational Research. 30 (4), 332-339.

Ontario Association of Deans of Education (1982). Future directions: preservice teacher education in Ontario, Toronto.

Patterson, R. S. (1987). Heightening effectiveness in teacher education. Alberta Teachers Association Magazine. June, 20-23.

Schon, D.A. (1987). Educating the reflective practioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the profession. San Francisco, CA: Jersey-Bars.

Simmons, J. M. and Sparks, G. M. (1989). "Research on preservice students' reflective pedagogical thinking." Presentation at the Association of Teacher Educators' Annual Conference, St. Louis.

Disk: Juliebö 5
File: Partnership In Teacher Educ